

February 19, 1958

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Dear Syd:

I hope you have been enjoying your summer vacation. It is a little hard to visualize it when we are in the midst of the bitter cold as we have been having lately. Fortunately we are a little bit out of the snow belt and have not been getting the several feet that has buried places like Michigan City, Indiana.

I am, of course, a little sorry that Val will not be coming to Madison after all next year but, of course, Esther and I have nothing but the most earnest solicitations for her.

What I mainly want to write you about in this letter is a very important service that you could give to Australian science, one where the yield would be very large compared to the investment. I brought the matter up in my Fulbright report and it came to my attention again when I saw in the current issue of the Journal of Bacteriology an account of some work on the receptor destroying enzyme that closely parallels some of Eric French's interests. It occurred to me that Eric would be likely not to see this journal in the normal course of events for another three or four months. It was a simple job for me to airmail a photostat of it to him but it occurred to me that this inordinate delay in the exchange of scientific journals may be one of the major factors in the sense of isolation that many of your compatriots feel. To me it seems just utter nonsense that such delays should be tolerated in an age when we have such excellent means of rapid transport. It seems to me that the problem is much more one of organization rather than finance and knowing your exuberant energy and worldly wisdom I thought you might ought to be the one to prod about it. I hope my intruding on this subject will not be taken amiss and I do so out of a sense of identification with Australian affairs. I hardly have to suggest the ways and means by which to break down this barrier of delay as they are going to be obvious to anyone when the full significance of it is appreciated. Action on this matter should, I think, proceed from Australian initiative but I should think that there would be a sympathetic hearing here for any proposal of mutual exchange. It is just as ridiculous that we should have to wait four to six months for the Australian journals to arrive at our libraries.

I have also mentioned my feelings on this matter to Sir Mac.

If I can again justify my credentials to speak on this matter, it might be on the basis that an outsider can sometimes see the full effect of an irritation that you have had to live with even better than the people more directly involved.

I hope you know a good place to go hunting for an emu; I have to report that the egg, of all the things that we have been so delighted to receive during the past several months, is the only one not to have arrived.

How are you making out towards the financing of your new building? Do write us the news whenever it is convenient for you to do so.

Yours sincerely,